21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

III. Explanations

1. General

124 128 601 Most of my informants were illiterate. The spelling of the terms was checked and corrected by my English-speaking and writing Khasi- and Pnar- friends, mentioned in para one, to whom thanks are being here once more expressed. All responsibility for spelling mistakes, however, which may have slipped into this list has of course to be borne by me.

Blanks (—) or question marks (?) in one of the columns do not necessarily mean that there is no word used, by the respective group, for the particular term. They more often indicate that my informants did not use, or know, the particular term, or that I failed to enquire about it in a manner sufficiently clear to my informants. This is particularly true of general terms, partly or fully corresponding to English general terms, such as parents or grand-parents, or the terms No. 9/a and b, 13, 15/a, 19-21, and 26, which were partly explained to me, by Khasi friends in Shillong, where I stayed some time after completion of field-work during the rainy season. Hence I could no more return for verification to the little accessible Wár-villages in the steep southern slopes. Although I am planning to utilise a future opportunity for such checking up, I am yet publishing the present results in the hope that they may thus become accessible to field-workers among other S. E.-Asiatic, and especially Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples.

193 601 128 All terms which are equal for both sexes (cf. Nos. 10, 11, 18, 19, etc.) are used with *ka* and *u* respectively. These sexdetermining preposed articles, as also the honorific *i* are specially mentioned in the list, only if this is essential for the understanding of the respective terms as in Nos. 3-5, 7, 8, or 10.

2. Special

601 Term No. 1 — to give birth or beget (*khe*) signifies also relatives on the paternal side as in *pare khe* (paternal cousins No. 9/c), in contradistinction to *pare kur*, 9/b, (lit.: cousins of the clan), i. e. maternal cousins, since the clan is a matrilineal unit. This usage of the word *khe* appears also significantly in the terms 15/a, 17, 18/b, 20, 22, 32 and, as an integral part of the Khasi kinship terminology, renders it highly improbable that the Khasi matrilineal system could have originated in ignorance of the biological function of the father. It is a significant feature in the matrilineal social system.

[84] The terms 3 to 3/b refer to unmarried but biologically marriageable youths. [83] [584] It will be noted that there are (and were in 1914) no indications of puberty-rites for either girls or boys. There is also no child-marriage among Khasi. The use of special terms for mature, unmarried youths is therefore significant.

[428] Term 6 — *i* as honorific article, is at the same time indicative of diminution [*], which is remarkable for two reasons: (firstly) the diminution is used for the oldest and most respected family members, like the diminution

[*] Nissen Sasse (1886), p. 84.